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Project of new university library building in Ljubljana

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Abstract:

The paper describes the need for the new building of the National and University Library and Central Technological Library of University in Ljubljana. The project of the building and the cooperation of two Libraries in one building is described.

1. Introduction

At the time of the 13th IATUL conference in 1989 in Ljubljana, the capital of the then Yugoslav republic Slovenia, no one suspected that two years later Slovenia would be an independent country.

Slovenia has about 2 million inhabitants. In 1992 the GDP amounted to something more than 6100 US\$ per inhabitant. The Slovene economy was affected considerably by the loss of one-third of its market in the republics of the former Yugoslavia; reorientation towards other markets is a slow process. Since 1987 industrial production has decreased by 43 %; this has given rise to unemployment which has risen to 19 %. Furthermore, there are about 80.000 refugees from certain republics of the former Yugoslavia in Slovenia; this figure represents about 4 % of the entire population.

It is understandable that in such conditions building of libraries is not a priority task, although our efforts for the preservation of our national identity will be - in view of Slovenia's small size - greater than before. But we expect conditions to grow better in a few years, surely also owing to the privatization of our economy and a stronger orientation of Slovenia towards the European market.

The attainment of independence of Slovenia has brought about the need for creating a great number of autonomous national institutions to enable the country to function as an independent state. In the new building of the University Library there will be, besides the basic library programme, space also for the national CIP center, the national ISBN center, the national ISDS agency, and the Standardization and Metrology Office.

2. The university setting in Ljubljana

After the second world war the development of the University of Ljubljana was, unfortunately, guided not only by professional but also by political decisions. So there was no great interest for the University to be a solidly organized institution. New faculties were built on quite different locations lest the concentration of students in one place should become too strong.

Thus the University of Ljubljana is still an organizationally very weakly connected institution, since all the faculties, and even both libraries, are legally and economically independent units. The Statute of the University does not deal with the faculties' organization which is entirely in their own hands. The University consists of 23 faculties with 168 organization units (institutes, departments or chairs) and some infrastructural units. About 25.000 students are matriculated; the rough number of teachers is 1800, somewhat over 400 of them being professors in ordinary.

3. The actual state of libraries at the University of Ljubljana

The diversity of the University is reflected in the diversity of the libraries. Thus we have in Ljubljana, besides the two large independent libraries (the National and University Library and the Central Technological Library), four other quite strong central libraries belonging to the faculties of medicine, biotechnology, economics, and social science, as well as some larger libraries

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attached to certain bigger independent institutes. Most other faculties have their own libraries too, and there is a number of departmental libraries. Some of the faculties have only several departmental libraries and no faculty ones; thus, for instance, the Faculty of Humanities and Linguistics has 16 departmental libraries within a single building, which are not connected even by a shared catalogue.

3.1 The National and University Library (NUK)

NUK was established in 1774, and by 1782 it contained 13.617 items. Until now it has been, as our national library, offering a great support to the growth of the Slovene national consciousness. When the Slovene university was founded (1919) it assumed also the function of the central university library, since when it has been functioning as the national as well as the university library.

The number of its matriculated users is 12.000, 9.000 of these being students. The rest are teachers and researchers employed at the University and institutes as well as representatives of the Slovene economy. The amount of information supplied annually is 210.000, the number of materials lent 240.000.

The library stock comprises about 1.000.000 monograph units, 250.000 periodical volumes, 500.000 units of special materials and 300.000 items other than books; there are 116 members of the library staff. The library is financed by three ministries.

For quite some time NUK has been suffering a shortage of room for storing its materials in the existing building, therefore it has rented some depots; but they are climatically unsuitable and represent relatively great expense. Certain researches have been done which show that the decay and destruction of the materials there are too fast - which means, in other words, a decay of the Slovene national and cultural heritage. The lack of space is aggravated even more by the fact that, since the time when Plečnik designed the original building, the number of students at the University of Ljubljana has increased so much that its capacities do not enable normal educational and research work any more.

3.2 The Central Technological Library to the University of Ljubljana (CTK)

CTK was founded in 1948 as the central technological library to the then High Technological School of Ljubljana. After the fusion of this school into the University it remained a legally and economically independent library, covering the needs of the University as well as of industry. CTK is financed directly by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education and Sport, to which it is also immediately responsible.

The Library has about 8000 matriculated members and 17.000 other users. Rather more than one half of the users are students, the rest are mostly university teachers, researchers from institutes and engineers from different firms. The annual visit count is 90.000 and the total number of books and other materials borrowed yearly in the reading room or for use at home is 180.000.

The library stock comprises approximately 120.000 monographs, 60.000 periodical volumes, 1100 current periodical titles, 15.000 research papers and theses, 100.000 standards and ten databases.

The Library operates in an old villa where the extremely limited space does not allow open access to the stock. Its total surface, together with a storehouse on another location, is 2000 m². In spite of great efforts by the Library's management, and several outline schemes for a new building in recent decades, a new edifice has not been built. CTK cooperates in interlibrary lending and functions as an information service: it has a staff of 51 employees.

3.3 Trends regarding the Library

In recent years we have been noticing a considerable increase in the number of visits to libraries. This is due to several facts. The changes in Slovene politics and society gave rise to greater interest in education. Until the falling apart of Yugoslavia, libraries of the former republics exchanged materials between them, and the Slovene public had a lot of world literature at their disposal in Serbian and Croatian translations. The lessening of contacts with the ex-Yugoslav republics has caused a decrease in the use of technical literature in these languages, in almost every field. The Slovene libraries have started purchasing more original foreign literature which is, in the current economic conditions, relatively expensive for individual buyers, so this is another fact which encourages people to visit libraries. According to our expectations more severe criteria for university teachers and students will bring about a greater demand for literature and an increase in visits to libraries. Also the tendency towards a stronger university in Ljubljana in recent years acts in favour of a new library.

4. The decision of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia regarding the construction of a single library building

Being fully aware of the importance of a new library to Slovene science, education and economy, as well as of the impossible space conditions in both university libraries in Ljubljana, in 1990 the Government of the Republic of Slovenia decided to work out a project for a modern university library and design a new building. Every country creates its organization forms and its library and information system according to its own possibilities, professional potentials and development prospects. The decision was influenced also by the previous plans of both libraries to build each a new edifice - at the same time and only 1300 m apart.

5. Definition of the aims and demands of the University Library in Ljubljana

Since the demands of the national library on the one hand and the university library on the other are sometimes not only different but even contrary, this decision imposed a demanding and responsible task on the librarians: to plan and organize the new library in such a way that it will function as uniformly as possible for the benefit of the users, while its separate segments will be organized differently with regard to their specific demands. Besides the building itself the fusion of the libraries will bring about several other positive effects such as a uniform informational infrastructure, a more uniform method of ordering and processing of materials, and more complete information and interlibrary loan services.

The new University Library of Ljubljana (UKL) will be created by functionally integrating both existing university libraries, with their stock and activities, in a new building. The new library will be the central Slovene library and its main activities will be the following:

- performing the function of the central university library for the University of Ljubljana,
- performing all functions of the national library
- guiding the development of library science and practice in Slovenia as well as connecting our libraries into a unique library and information system.

With regard to the complexity and combination of its different purposes UKL will develop:

- coordination of the purchases of library materials from the viewpoint of the national and central university library,
- processing of library materials according to internationally accepted professional standards,
- supplying library materials and information following the principles of universal accessibility of information and publications,
- storage and protection of nationally relevant library materials.

With the above mentioned orientations the new library will unite in its new building the programmes of the following existing institutions:

- National and University Library (except the programmes of the national collections which will remain in the old building of NUK),
- Central Technological Library,

and the following parallel and compatible units:

- Library Development Center,
- Library Science Department of the Faculty of Humanities and Linguistics of the University of Ljubljana,
- Library of Slavonic Languages and Literatures,
- Computer Center to the University of Ljubljana,
- state agencies for ISSN and ISBN and
- Standardization and Metrology Office.

All existing central libraries covering separate branches of science and belonging to separate faculties will remain intact, for instance the Central Medical Library, the Central Economic Library, the Central Library of Social Studies, and the Central Library of Biotechnology.

We expect, however, that in time the quality of the services performed by the new library will exert some influence on the entire organization of our libraries, so that more materials will be gathered where they will be accessible for most users.

6. Organization and functioning of UKL

6.1 The basic starting points of the organization and functioning of UKL are:

- its organization will enable the greatest possible unification of the activities of different units of UKL, while preserving at the same time all reasonable specificities of their thematic orientations, so as to give the users the feeling that they are in one library,
- the materials of UKL will not be duplicated so that the lending and storage principles will be as unified as possible, which goes especially for the materials with a national function,
- the basic principles of protection of the materials against theft, of allowing open access to the materials and of processing the publications will be unified and adjusted too,
- UKL will create a cooperative database,
- the principles of access to local and other databases will be unified,
- university textbooks will be placed together from all fields of science, according to unified principles of set-up and lending.

Each of the two units (technology and humanities) will cover its field as to purchase policy, professional processing and information services.

At a general information desk some of the activities of the information service will be performed together:

- instruction on the use of OPAC,
- searching on terminals,
- general information on the library,
- use of secondary documents.

Materials on open access will be borrowed at the information desk. Materials from the storehouse will be handed over at a common lending desk. Common principles will be observed also with regard to interlibrary loan.

The storehouse service will be unique for the entire UKL.

UKL will be managed by the director of UKL, while separate programmes will be conducted by heads of programmes, the legal service, a secretary (managing the economic services) and accountancy will be common for the entire UKL. Financial services will be organized within separate economic units because of different financing of individual programmes. Maintenance services will be organized on the UKL level.

6.2 Specifics of the functioning of UKL in the new conditions

Construction of the new University Library will bring about a change in the possibilities for use of the existent building of NUK. The original Plečnik's edifice will retain the older library material, special collections (manuscripts, music, cartography, pictures and a collection of special library materials), that is, the fields which make the actual NUK our national library; a part of this function will be (because of its thematic links with other ones) moved into the new building (bibliography, current materials and information).

In the field of humanities the stock will be set up mainly for open access. The materials obtained for its national function will be set up partly for open access (professionally relevant materials) and partly in closed storehouses. The materials for open access will be set up separately for newspapers, magazines and monographs. With the latter, professional reference materials will be placed at the starting point of each group. The field of fiction will be set up for open access in a special department and will be only for use in the library reading room. This department will be united with the Library of Slavonic Languages and Literatures which will contribute not only its stock, but also its staff - information specialists and selectors for the field of fiction.

Magazines and newspapers will not be available for taking home, thus their permanent accessibility for use in the reading room will be ensured.

General reference materials will be set up at a general information desk where information specialists, particularly in reference materials and in different kinds of searching databases in the humanities (including foreign databases) will be available at any time. For more extensive information, specialists for definite scientific fields will be at the users' disposal, at given times, in rooms reserved only for this purpose; these people will perform also the duty of the selection, of the materials and will take part in the purchase policy.

Information services for periodicals will be the domain of information specialists in the periodicals department; the users will find them next to the materials on open access. At the same time they will act as selectors of the materials. Information services in the field of national materials stored in UKL will be performed together with other information services.

Acquisition, cataloguing and classification will be divided into two parts, cataloguing and subject classification. The national bibliography department (national function) will perform only the selection function for monographs and serial publications; articles from the field of Slovene literature will be processed separately.

6.3 Specifics of the functioning of CTK in the new conditions

In the fields of natural sciences and technology, as well as in interdisciplinary fields, we would like to place the emphasis on the user rather than on the materials, processing of materials, etc. In order to help our present users not to get lost in the large new library and our new users to find their way more easily, open access to the materials will be organized in such a way that the materials will be divided into ten main groups. Within each group reference materials, monographs and periodicals will be set up separately. The set-up systematics will be similar to that in the library of the High Technological School in Vienna.

In each main group there will be information and display panels. In the immediate vicinity of the materials there will be rooms for the information specialists in specific fields. They will conduct the purchase policy for their branches, process the materials and supply the users with information; they will be available throughout the working hours.

The users will be allowed to take home most of the materials - even periodicals, except the newest issues. They will be asked to return the materials borrowed from the shelves for use in the reading room to their original place.

7. Location and project of the new building

The building of the University Library will take place in the narrow centre of Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, which has been a crossing point of Europe since antiquity, where Roman, German and Slavonic cultures have mutually enriched each other. The chosen area for the new building is in the close vicinity of central state and major town institutions, the inner city and university buildings. This area has also other notable features. It is an important archeological site with the remains of Aemona, a Roman city, and the remains from early and late medieval time. Close by is the Church of Crossknights, a masterpiece of the Italian baroque architect Domenico Rossi, who mainly worked in Venice; his is the famous Jesuits' Church in Venice, also, near by there is the Ursuline Church in the Palladian style. But above all, this area is remarkable because of the architecture of the famous Slovene architect Jože Plečnik with his monumental buildings and remarkable solutions for the regulations of the urban environment of Ljubljana, the metropolis of Slovenia. This is the place where the present National and University Library, the masterpiece of Plečnik, stands. It was built before the second world war, in the time of ancient Yugoslavia, as the result of Slovene intellectual pursuits. In his late years Plečnik rearranged the complex of Križanke into an open-air theatre with representative outside spaces belonging to it. Here is also Plečnik's finest arrangement of the promenade in Ljubljana with the bridge across the Gradaščica linking the Trnovo Church to the town centre. The layout is enhanced by sequences of spaces expanding into the French Revolution Square with its memorial obelisk, and further into the area of parterre arrangements and greenery of Vegova Street, up to the Congress Square, where his monumental propylaea, a memorial portal of the South Square, was never completed.

The quadrangle of the new University Library has two sides built up with older, well-preserved houses, while both free sides will be shaped by the new building. Thus the whole quadrangle will be joined together, the inner garden will be rearranged into the green lapidarium with the Roman remains presented in situ. The main structure of the future library, which will have six floors at most, above ground, is situated away from the external streets, deeply inside the quadrangle. So its upper levels will be imperceptible in this architectural protected area. Along the pavement there is only a low, two-floor section, brought to vast terraces with a green edge. These spaces will offer to the visitors to the library superb views on the most beautiful architectural scenery of Ljubljana.

The finest and most easily accessible levels of the new library are strictly designed for the users. The main entrance lays stress upon the vestibule and the internal courtyard with numerous purposes, in which the most important Aemona's excavations will be exposed. At the back of the vestibule, along the passage to the internal section of the library, there is the lending service. The library information centre, with all corresponding areas and activities, will be located at the far end of the entrance axis. Public activities of the library are accommodated at both sides of the main entrance at ground level. They reflect the character of this part of the town,

enriching and vitalizing it. This section includes a great multi-purpose hall with ancillary areas, exhibition space, specialized and secondhand book shops, an all-night library, the lending section of handbooks, a cafeteria and a student pub opening onto the greenery of the South Park and thus reviving the tradition of students pubs from the pioneer period of our university. The remaining external part of the ground floor of the new building is reserved for various shops along the covered public promenade. These activities fulfil the needs of the university area, revitalize this part of the town, and protect the internal areas of the library against noise from the surrounding streets.

The area of open access to the newspapers will be arranged on the ground floor, directly at the main entrance and by the information centre. The open access to the journals of humanities and other scientific fields, that are now part of the holdings of the National and University Library, will be on the ground floor mezzanine. The open access to journals and monographs from the field of technology and other fields that are now kept by Central Technical Library will be located on the first floor, the greatest and the most beautiful floor of the new building. The library funds with ancillary areas for information specialists are located in the central part of this level. This is a square ground plan with side of 60 meters. In the north part, including the preserved buildings of the area, there are areas for associated activities, larger and smaller lecture rooms, exposition rooms, rooms for professional associations and the club of the technical intelligentsia. In the west wing of the new building, linked to the central area of the library and divided from the external access, there are rooms for auxiliary experts, the department for standards and patents, and the information centre for civil engineering.

The monographs department for humanities and other scientific fields belonging today to the National and University Library, and Slavonic Library, will be in the two higher floors connected to one another. These areas are also naturally highlighted by illuminated ceilings. They are directed to the precious and attractive environment in which the new library will be built. The spacious, flexibly designed areas of open access to the holdings are also in this department complemented with the necessary associated programs, lecture rooms, exhibition halls and club.

The upper level is arranged only in the central part of the new building, because of the roofs of glass and the lower terraces which are open to the public areas of the library, otherwise it is devoted to the bibliographic and subject services and the management. On the first level of the vast underground part there are the areas designed for the accession and associated programs such as vehicular access, parking lots and other technical services: the lowered floor of the lapidarium gives the natural light to this area. On the remaining three underground levels there are stores for the library material that include also the treasures of national importance, technical programs associated with the printing house, the computer centre and the areas for building services. Two pedestrian underground passages to Plečnik's building and The Faculty of Philosophy are also planned here.

The net area of the future building, including the two existing houses in the vicinity, comprises 35.794 m². From this surface, 27.322m² (76%) is planned for the primary activity of the library, the rest of it will be for the associated activities the Library Development Centre, Department for the Librarianship of the Faculty of Philosophy, the Communication and Computer Information Service of the University in Ljubljana, the Standards Office of the Republic of Slovenia, shops in the external section of the building at street level, parking places and installations. The total volume of the building is 160.129m³, of which 79.257m³ (49%), above and 80.872m³ (51%) under the level of the ground.

The new library will contain 1.336.115 volumes of monographs: 168.625 in open-access stacks, 105.690 in semi-open areas and 1.061.800 items in closed-access stacks. In the library there are 6.100 titles of serials, with a three to five-year stock of back numbers. There are 500 titles of newspapers and 5.600 titles of periodicals in the open access areas, whereas an eight to ten-year stock of the same titles will be stored in the semi-open stores. The volume of library material is based on the analysis that the planned storage capacity will be sufficient for the next 30 to 40 years. In the various study areas there are a total of 823 seats and 81 seats in individual study cells. In the new building, it is estimated, there will be 285 workers employed, of which 165 will be of library.

8. The actual state of building preparations

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia entrusted the preparations for the building of the library to the Ministry of Science and Technology. For their accompanying and acceptance of overall decisions the Government appointed a Construction Board and the Ministry of Science and Technology a Project Council. The preparations were performed simultaneously in all key domains; now the stage has been reached when the final decision upon, and approval of, this investment has to be accepted by the Government as well as the Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia. The required procedures for the acceptance of this decision are in hand.

All necessary fundamentals for a successful carrying out of the project have been prepared and accepted - planning and architectural solutions; the policy of acquiring and managing the building lots is known, the bases for investment decisions given.

The preparations for the construction of the University Library of Ljubljana (UKL) are financed from the Republic's budget. A special agreement with the Ljubljana city authorities is being prepared upon their participation in these preparations and financing. The major part of the resources for the building is supposed to be provided from the State budget in the next five-year period (till 1998). Every possibility for the inflow of foreign capital and whatever support in the financing of this investment is still open.

The wish of the bearers of the library programmes and the Republic of Slovenia is to verify the programme fundamentals and the project solution also on an international level, that is to say, to compare them with similar solutions in Europe and the world.

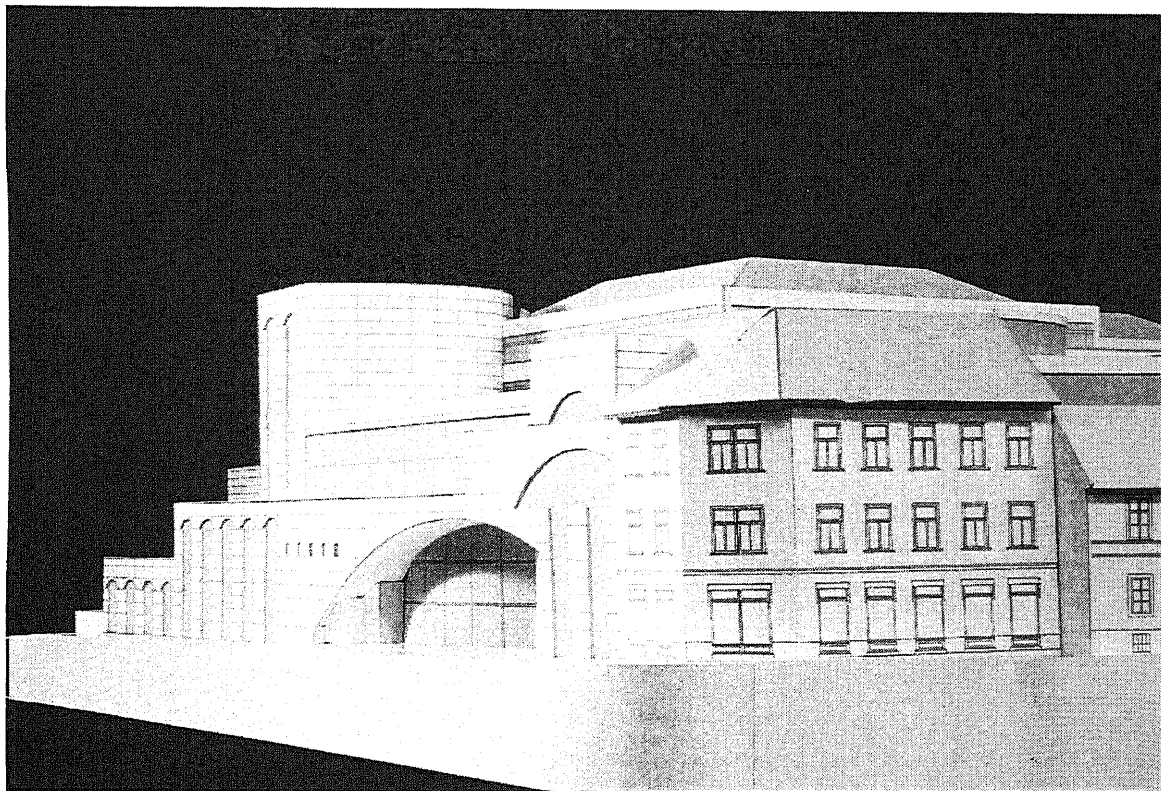
9. Conclusion

Slovenia hopes that the programme of the new UKL will bring it closer to the European countries with well-developed library and information activities. Our main purpose is to satisfy our users with the offered solutions, to provide security for nationally relevant materials, to attain a greater cohesiveness of libraries at home and to present to the outer world our will and capacity for real participation in the integration currents in these, for mankind more and more important, fields of action.

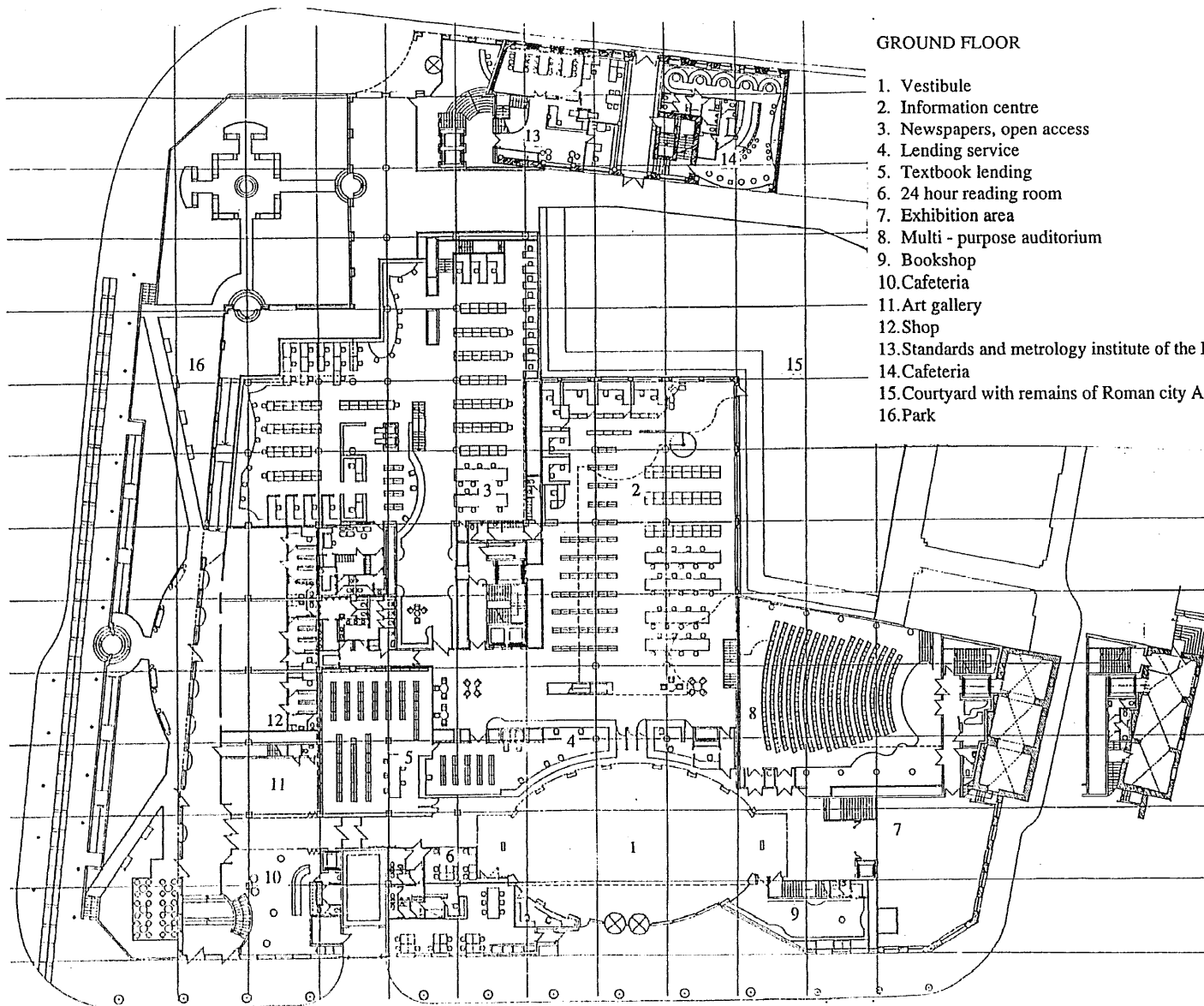
By presenting the project of the new library we wish to launch a discussion and hear some comments and proposals of more experienced librarians.

Literature

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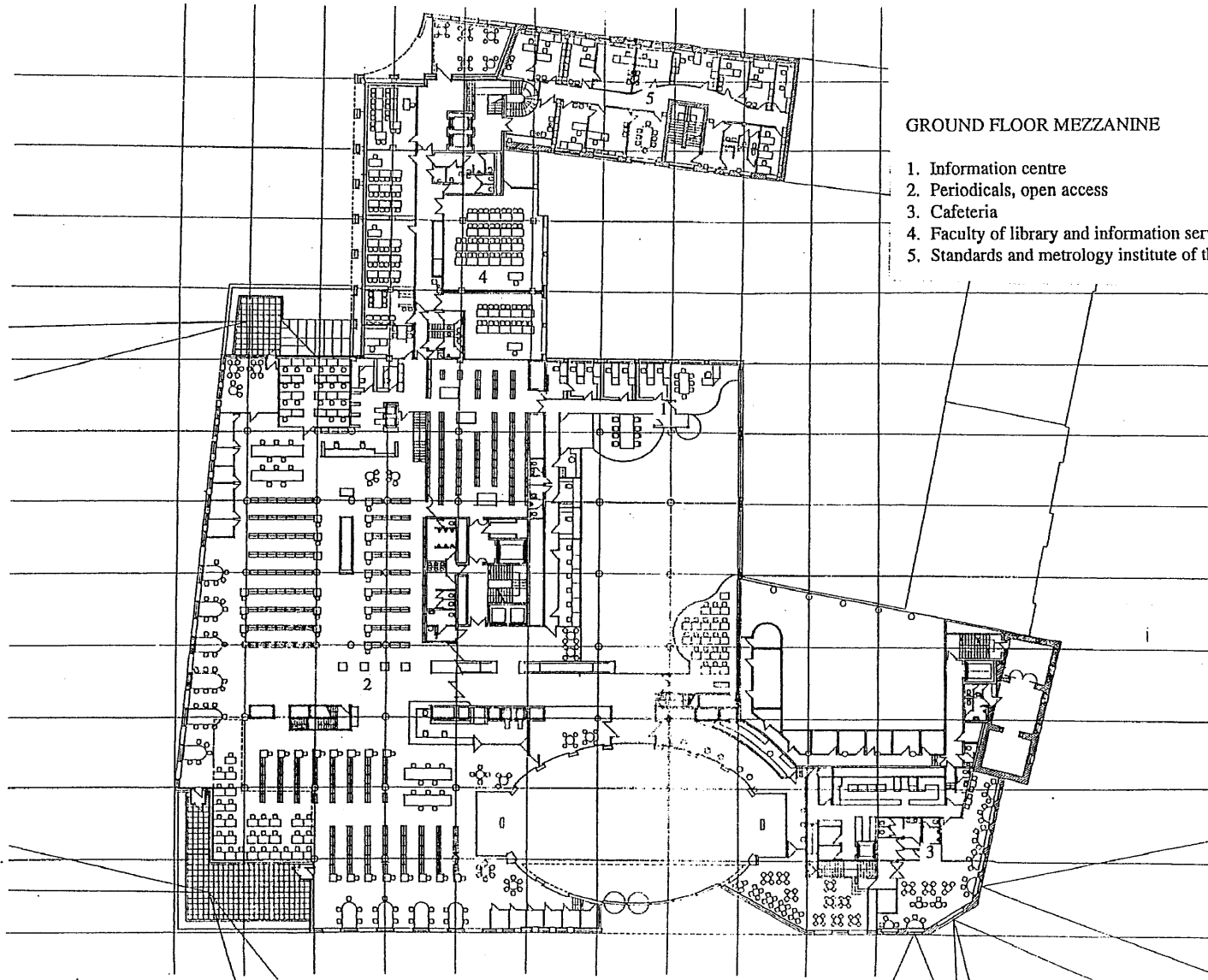


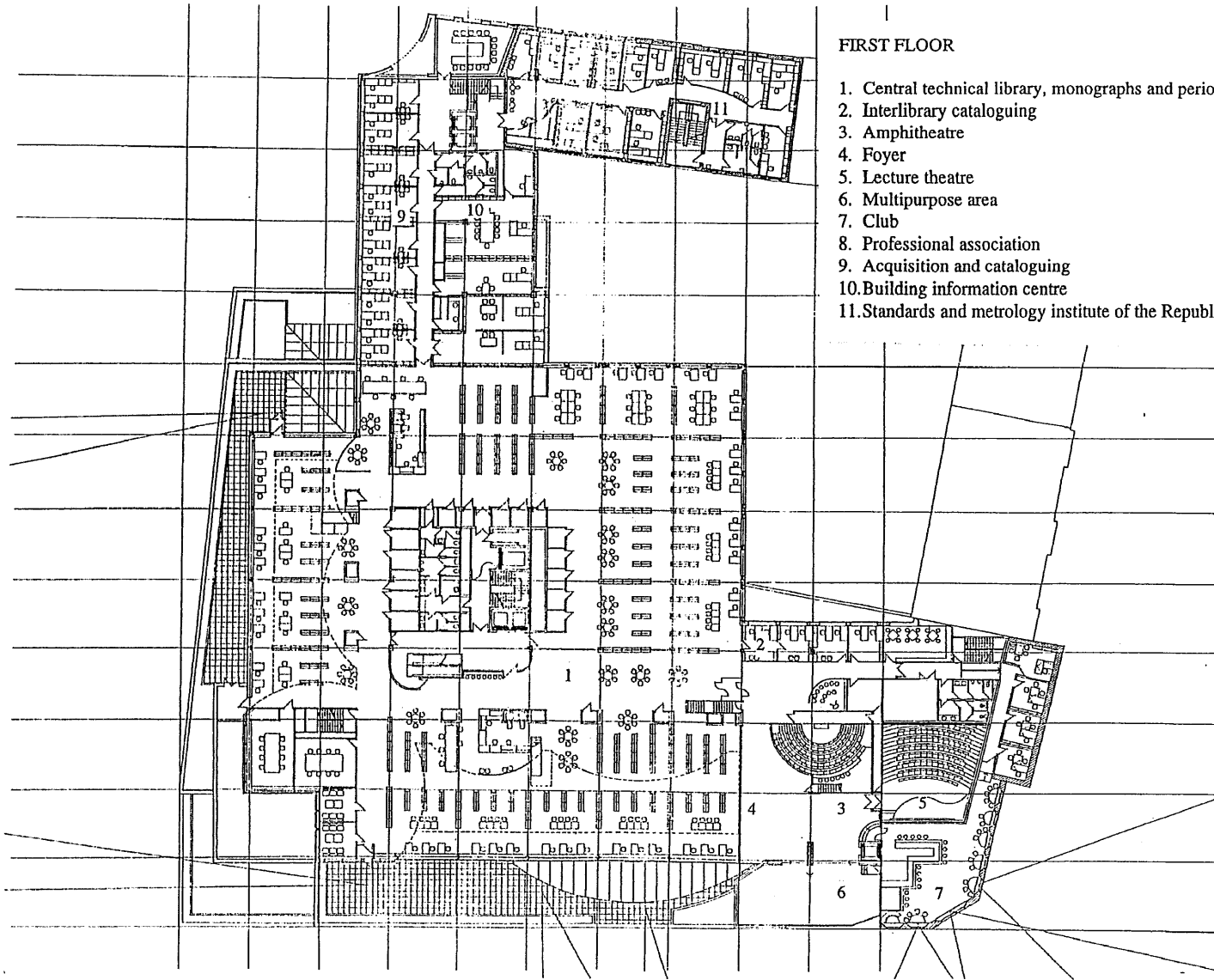
View to the entrance front of the University Library from Emonska Street



GROUND FLOOR

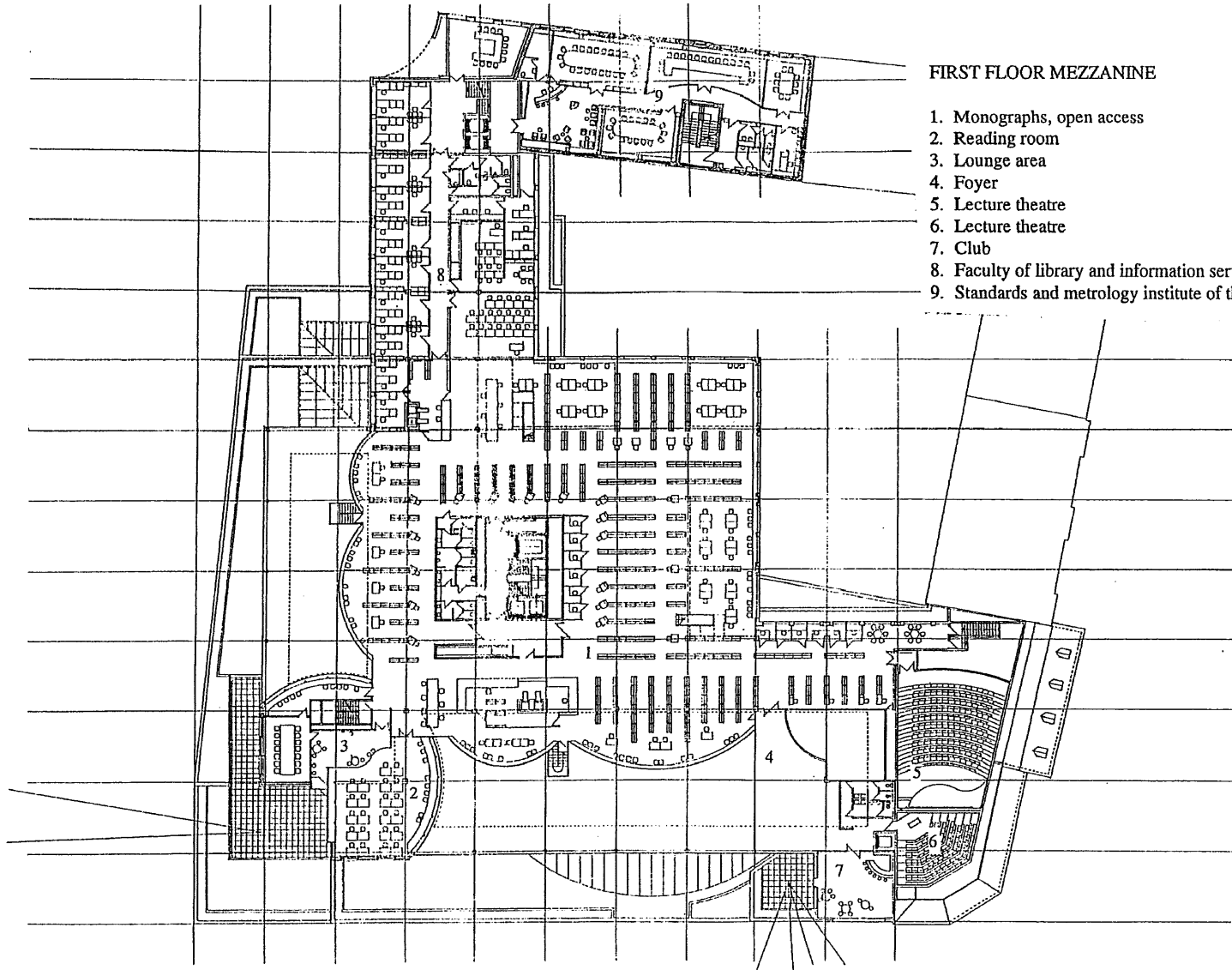
1. Vestibule
2. Information centre
3. Newspapers, open access
4. Lending service
5. Textbook lending
6. 24 hour reading room
7. Exhibition area
8. Multi - purpose auditorium
9. Bookshop
10. Cafeteria
11. Art gallery
12. Shop
13. Standards and metrology institute of the Republic
14. Cafeteria
15. Courtyard with remains of Roman city Aemona
16. Park





FIRST FLOOR

1. Central technical library, monographs and periodicals, open access
2. Interlibrary cataloguing
3. Amphitheatre
4. Foyer
5. Lecture theatre
6. Multipurpose area
7. Club
8. Professional association
9. Acquisition and cataloguing
10. Building information centre
11. Standards and metrology institute of the Republic of Slovenia



FIRST FLOOR MEZZANINE

1. Monographs, open access
2. Reading room
3. Lounge area
4. Foyer
5. Lecture theatre
6. Lecture theatre
7. Club
8. Faculty of library and information service
9. Standards and metrology institute of the Republic